

Document 377 of 576

ENVELOPE

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ZNR UUUUU

HEADER

R 251338Z FEB 94
FM DIA WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC
RUFGAID/USEUCOM AIDES VAIHINGEN GE
RHHJMCY/JICPAC HONOLULU HI
RUCIAEA/FASTC WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OH//SCIR//
RUCMACC/CDRPSYOPGP FT BRAGG NC//AORC-POG-SB//
RUCBSAA/CINCUSACOM NORFOLK VA//J2//
RUWSMXI/AMC INTEL CEN SCOTT AFB IL//IN//
RUCQVAB/USCINCSOC INTEL OPS CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RUEOFAA/COMJSOC FT BRAGG NC//J2//
RULKQAN/MARCORINTACT DET QUANTICO VA
RUEABOA/HQ AFOSI IOC BOLLING AFB DC//DTA//
RULSJGI/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC
RUSNNOA/USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
RUEALGX/SAFE
R 251207Z FEB 94
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:RSA/POW-MIA//
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1909
INFO RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//OJCS-PW/MIA/J5//
RUEHTL/AMEMBASSY TALLINN 0207
RUEHSK/AMEMBASSY MINSK 0275
RUEAHOF/CDRPERSCOM ALEX VA//TAPC-PEZ//
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC//
BT

(b) (3)

CONTROLS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 005280

DEPT FOR EUR/ISCA AND EAP

E.O. 12356: N/A

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

TAGS: KPOW, MOPS, PREL, PHUM, RS
SUBJECT: POW/MIA: INTERVIEW OF NIKOLAY
FILIPPOVICH SHARKOV.

1. SUMMARY. TASK FORCE RUSSIA TEAM MEMBERS TRAVELLED TO GOMEL', BELARUS, FEBRUARY 9-12, 1994. MEMBERS INTERVIEWED NIKOLAY FILIPPOVICH SHARKOV. SHARKOV RELATED HIS ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY OF A CRASHED AMERICAN AIRCRAFT AND THE REMAINS OF ITS CREW SOMEWHERE IN THE "FAR EAST" IN EARLY 1950. BECAUSE OF HIS RELUCTANCE TO DIVULGE WHAT HE BELIEVES TO BE POSSIBLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION, SHARKOV, WHO WAS NOT AN EYEWITNESS, ONLY SKETCHILY DESCRIBED THE INCIDENT AND THOSE INVOLVED. BEFORE HE WILL DIVULGE FURTHER INFORMATION, SHARKOV WANTS AN ASSURANCE FROM THE RUSSIANS THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE SITUATION (INCLUDING THE LOCATION OF HIS AIRBASE, HIS UNIT'S MISSION AND THE FACT OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT) ARE NO LONGER CLASSIFIED. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

2. ON FEBRUARY 11, 1994, TFR MEMBERS RUBIN AND GROH INTERVIEWED NIKOLAY FILIPPOVICH SHARKOV IN GOMEL', BELARUS. THE INTERVIEW WAS SCHEDULED IN RESPONSE TO A LETTER FROM SHARKOV IN WHICH HE WROTE THAT HE HAD INFORMATION REGARDING AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT AND ITS DECEASED CREWMEMBERS THAT HAD BEEN DISCOVERED IN THE 1950'S IN THE "FAR EAST," OSTENSIBLY BY SOVIET AIR FORCES. SHARKOV, A MAN IN HIS EIGHTIES, REFUSED TO TELL TFR ANY INFORMATION ABOUT HIS MILITARY CAREER, EXPECT THAT HE WAS AN AIRCRAFT COMMANDER IN 1950 BASED IN THE FAR EAST.

3. SHARKOV PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

A. ON DECEMBER 28, 1949, AN AIRCREW FAILED TO RETURN TO HIS BASE, AND A SEARCH WAS LAUNCHED. DURING THE SEARCH AN AIRCRAFT WAS LOCATED AND A TEAM WAS SENT TO INVESTIGATE. SHARKOV SAID THAT THE AIRCRAFT TURNED OUT TO BE AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT. HE SAID THAT SEVEN OR EIGHT DECEASED CREW MEMBERS WERE FOUND, ALL OF THEM LOCATED IN THE FUSELAGE OF THE PLANE EXCEPT ONE, WHO WAS FOUND NEXT TO A TREE. THE CREWMEMBER NEXT TO THE TREE WAS WEARING A LIGHT LEATHER JACKET. HE SAID THAT, JUDGING FROM THE CONDITION OF THE BODIES, AND THE CONDITION OF THE CREWMEMBER NEXT TO THE TREE, WHO SHARKOV SAID HAD DIED OF HUNGER, THE AIRCRAFT HAD CRASHED THERE SOME TIME BEFORE.

B. ALTHOUGH HE INSINUATED THAT HE KNEW OF WHAT TYPE THE AIRCRAFT WAS, HE WOULD SAY ONLY THAT IT

WAS AN "AMERICAN TWO-ENGINE PLANE." SHARKOV INITIALLY STATED THAT HE WOULD GIVE TFR THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE CRASH SITE, THEN LATER DECLINED, SAYING ONLY THAT IT WAS SOMEWHERE IN THE "FAR EAST," NOT NEAR KOREA.

C. WHEN QUESTIONED DIRECTLY, SHARKOV SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AN EYEWITNESS, AND THAT HE HAD SEEN NEITHER THE AIRCRAFT NOR ITS CREWMEMBERS. HE MENTIONED TWO INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED TO HIS UNIT: KONSTANTIN BELASHOV, WHO WAS AT THE TIME A SECTION COMMANDER AND PRESENTLY LIVING IN TURTA, ESTONIA, AND ALEKSANDER CHUBANOV, THEN A JUNIOR LIEUTENANT AND NOW LIVING IN SARATOV, RUSSIA. SHARKOV SAID THAT WE WOULD ALL NEED TO MEET TO DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER, IF INDEED IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS IT AT ALL. SHARKOV DECLINED TO SAY IF THESE MEN WERE EYEWITNESSES. (TFR COMMENT: TFR IS ATTEMPTING TO CONTACT THESE INDIVIDUALS. END COMMENT.)

D. WHEN ASKED WHAT WAS DONE WITH THE AIRCRAFT OR WITH THE REMAINS OF THE CREWMEMBERS, SHARKOV SAID THAT, UNDOUBTEDLY, THE REMAINS OF THE CREW AND THE AIRCRAFT WERE THE SUBJECT OF MUCH INTEREST, BUT HE DECLINED TO GIVE DETAILS, OR SAY WHO WAS INTERESTED.

4. SHARKOV WOULD GIVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE INCIDENT TO TFR. HE SAID THAT HE IS WILLING TO PROVIDE MORE DETAILS IF HE RECEIVES WORD FROM THE RUSSIAN SIDE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS PUBLIC.

(TFR COMMENT: SHARKOV IS WORRIED THAT HE MAY BE

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/
GIVING POTENTIALLY CLASSIFIED INFORMATION TO A FOREIGN POWER, ALTHOUGH HE REALIZES THAT RUSSIA IS NOW A SEPARATE COUNTRY. HE SAID THAT HE WILL PROVIDE THE INFORMATION IF "VOLKOGONOV AND HIS PEOPLE" ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE INCIDENT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE. THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS REPORT WILL BE PASSED TO THE RUSSIAN SIDE OF THE COMMISSION FOR COMMENT OR CLARIFICATION. END COMMENT.)

5. AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW, SHARKOV PRODUCED A SMALL NEWSPAPER ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSPAPER "PRAVDA" ON AUGUST 13, 1992. IN THE ARTICLE, JOURNALIST BORIS OREKHOV RELAYED INFORMATION FROM A LETTER THAT PRAVDA APPARENTLY HAD RECEIVED FROM AN ORGANIZATION IN ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. THE ORGANIZATION OFFERED VARIOUS CASH FINDER'S FEES AND ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIPS AROUND THE UNITED STATES FOR THOSE WHO FOUND AMERICAN POWS. SHARKOV INQUIRED AS TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE OFFER PRINTED IN THE PAPER. TFR INFORMED SHARKOV THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DOES NOT OFFER MONEY FOR POW INFORMATION. (TFR COMMENT: A COPY OF THIS

ARTICLE HAS BEEN FAXED TO THE JCSB. END COMMENT.)

6. TASK FORCE RUSSIA SENDS. PICKERING

ADMIN

BT

#2808

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